

Remarks

Claims 1-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16 and 18 are pending.

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 18 have been amended.

Claim 2 has been canceled.

Claim 19 is new.

Claims 1-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16, 18 and 19 are submitted herein for review.

No new matter has been added.

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to claims 2-5 as improperly using the term "value of coin." Applicants have cancelled claim 2 and claims 3-5 have been amended to properly depend from claim 1 to correct this informality. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this objection.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Regarding claims 1 and 18, Applicants have amended the claims to clarify the term "several."

Regarding claim 1, Examiner has rejected the term "collecting the second coin..." as unclear. Applicants have amended this claim accordingly.

Regarding claim 2, the Examiner has rejected the terms, "new coin" and "storing the coin." Claim 2 has been cancelled. In light of these changes, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection.

On page 3, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 9, 12, 14-16 and 18, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McGinty et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,712,688) in view of Smeets et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,836,825). Applicants respectfully disagree with Examiner's claim of obviousness and offer the following remarks in response.

One embodiment of the present invention as claimed in independent claim 1 is directed to a method for processing coins introduced in a coin tester of an automatic unit for delivering goods or services. The coin tester has a selector for distinguishing the value of introduced coins; a pre-receptacle; at least one reserve for recycling certain coins which includes a number of locations, each location being able to receive only one coin of any value; a bowl for giving back coins; and a safe, in which the coins which will no longer be reused for giving back the change are stored in bulk.

The processing method of the present invention as claimed in claim 1 further includes an arrangement for receiving and identifying a first introduced coin having a first value, temporarily storing the coin in the pre-receptacle, and, if conditions relating to the value of the first introduced coin and conditions relating to the number of coins which are present in the reserve having the same value as the first introduced coin are satisfied, then collecting the first introduced coin into the reserve at any one of the number of locations. Change is then given back by transferring one or more coins to the bowl.

The method further includes receiving and identifying a second introduced coin having a second value and temporarily storing the second introduced coin in the pre-receptacle. If conditions relating to the value of the second introduced coin, and conditions relating to the number of coins which are present in the reserve having the same value as the second introduced coin are satisfied, then the second coin is collected into the reserve.

To this end, independent claims 1 and 18 relate to an arrangement where *an introduced coin is stored in the safe instead of the reserve, if the reserve is full, or if the number of coins which are present in the reserve having the same value as the introduced coin, is equal to a predetermined maximum number of coins.* This method allows the input coins to be used as the reserves for the change while simultaneously lowering the need for maintenance by sending excess coins of a certain value to a bulk storage safe. See paragraphs [0013] and [0014] of the present publication.

For each new coin to be stored in the reserve, the present invention as claimed includes a step for determining whether the coin should be stored in the reserve or in the safe. This determination step consists of comparing the number of coins present in the reserve which have the same value as the new coin to the maximum number of coins of the same value desired to be stored in the reserve.

Further, claims 6 and 11 relate to an arrangement that determines the values of coins which are likely to be exhausted rapidly and of increasing the number of locations dedicated to these coin values and conversely reducing the number of locations dedicated to the values of coins for which the majority of locations dedicated to them are likely to be always full.

In support of the rejection Examiner cites to the McGinty and Smeets references. The Examiner asserts that McGinty teaches all of the elements of the present invention except a pre-receptacle which is taught by Smeets and that it would have been obvious to combine the references to arrive at the present invention as claimed.

The McGinty reference teaches storing coins in a cash box when the main carousel is full, or if the coin deposited is a coin that is not normally given as return change. However, these are the only situations leading to the storing of coins in the safe (cash box). See McGinty Col. 4 lines 18 and 22. McGinty discloses a maximum number of coins per each value that can be stored in the main carousel. However, when the maximum number is reached, subsequent coins are sent to the storage carousel and not to the safe.

The Smeets reference teaches a coin storing device that employs drive motors that operate to rotate the carousels and position the coin stalls so that coins may be transferred between the carousels.

However, neither of the cited references, either alone or in combination with one another, teaches or suggests the present invention as claimed. For example, even if the references were combined as suggested by the Examiner, the resulting system and method would still not disclose an arrangement where an introduced coin is stored in the safe instead of the reserve, if the reserve is full, or if the number of coins which are present in the reserve having the same value as the introduced coin, is equal to a predetermined maximum number of coins.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art does not teach or suggest all of the elements as claimed in independent claims 1 and 18, and respectfully requests that

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the rejection of these claims be withdrawn. Likewise, as claims 3-7, 9, 12, and 14-16 depend from claim 1, and new claim 19 depends from claim 18, these claims should be allowed for at least the same reason.

Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16, and 18-19 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the prosecution of this Application he is invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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